



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Voluntary Report - public distribution

**Date:** 3/1/2006

**GAIN Report Number:** SW6007

## Sweden

### Livestock and Products

## Strong Suspicions of BSE in Sweden 2006

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**Report Highlights:**

On February 28, the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the National Veterinary Institute announced that a 12-year-old Swedish cow has tested positive in an initial test for BSE. While the finding is preliminary, suspicions have never before been so strong. Definitive results from the EU reference laboratory in England are expected in two weeks.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Stockholm [SW1]  
[SW]

**Strong Suspicions of BSE in Sweden**

On February 28, 2006, the very same day as Sweden first reported the discovery of highly pathogenic avian influenza, the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the National Veterinary Institute also announced that a 12-year-old cow had tested positive in an initial screening for BSE. While the results are still preliminary, suspicions have never before been so strong. Confirmatory results from the EU reference laboratory in England are expected in two weeks.

**The BOA Imposes Restrictions on Affected Farm**

The affected cow reportedly came from a farm in Vasteras, about 100 kilometers (62 miles) northwest of Stockholm. After showing signs of milk fever, the animal was slaughtered and tested according to the EU's control program for BSE. Restrictions have been placed on the farm prohibiting the movement, sale or slaughter of any ruminant on the premises.

The BOA is currently conducting a full investigation of the subject farm in order to determine if any risk factors were present which could have triggered BSE. Sweden imposed a ban on the utilization of meat and bone meal in animal feed in 1991, several years prior to the birth of the animal of interest and well before the 1994 EU-mandated feed ban.

**Will Sweden's Low-Risk Status Change?**

Sweden was the only European country classified as low-risk with regard to BSE. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) placed Sweden as a Category II country, indicating that the future risk of BSE was unlikely, but a BSE risk could not be excluded. All other EU countries are classified within the two higher risk categories. Should BSE be confirmed in Sweden, EFSA could reassess Sweden's status.

Despite Sweden's low-risk BSE status, a control program has been in place since 2001. So far, over 170,000 animals have been tested for BSE – with a number of false alarms. The current case has raised a stronger suspicion of BSE as preliminary test results indicated higher levels of misshaped prion proteins than any previous test conducted in Sweden. These prions are thought to be either the cause of BSE or a marker for the disease.

In the official press release, the BOA stressed that Sweden has long had far-reaching measures in place to prevent the entry of BSE-infected material into the food chain, the most important being the removal of risk material at slaughter.